

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 08778 081808Z

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8251

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 08778

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, VN

SUBJECT: FRENCH VIEWS EVOLUTION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ASIA, BOLLE, TOLD EMBOFF THAT GOF'S PRINCIPAL CONCERN WAS TO ATTEMPT A POLITICAL SOLUTION IN SOUTH VIETNAM WHICH WOULD SPARE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE FROM MILITARY ACTIONS AND WOULD PROVIDE THE POSSIBILITY OF THE MAINTENANCE FOR AT LEAST A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME OF A NON-COMMUNIST SOUTH VIETNAM. BOLLE GAVE THE USUAL VIEWS THAT THE PRG WAS NOT TOTALLY DOMINATED BY THE LAO DONG PARTY AND THAT EVEN THOSE WHO WERE IMPORTANT FIGURES IN THE LDP HIERARCHY HAD AN INTEREST IN MAINTAINING AN INDEPENDENT SOUTH VIETNAM. HE REITERATED ALSO THE USUAL LINE THAT USG SHOULD BE PREPARED TO WORK WITH THE PRG IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE ANY BASIC TENDENCIES TO DIVERGE FROM HANOI.

2. FRENCH WERE CONVINCED THAT PRG WISHED AT THIS TIME A POLITICAL SOLUTION WHICH WOULD CONSOLIDATE A "SLIGHTLY" PREPONDERANT POSITION FOR THE PRG AND ITS ELEMENTS WITHIN A "THIRD FORCE". THE PRG WOULD WISH NOT ONLY TO SPARE THE VIETNAMESE POPULATION, BUT ALSO TO KEEP THE NVN FORCES FROM MOVING STILL FURTHER SOUTH IN SOUTH VIETNAM. TO ATTAIN A POLITICAL RESOLUTION, THEY REQUIRED
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PAGE 02 PARIS 08778 081808Z

ONLY THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLITICAL PROVISIONS OF

THE PARIS AGREEMENT, AS UNDERSTOOD BY THE COMMUNISTS BOLLE READILY ADMITTED. THE FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND CONCORD (NCNRC) WAS STILL THEIR PRINCIPAL GOAL, AS MME. BINH HAD INFORMED THE FRENCH PRIOR TO HER DEPARTURE FOR AFRICA. THE THIRD FORCE WOULD OBVIOUSLY HAVE TO CONTAIN MANY PERSONS RESPONSIVE TO THE PRG, BUT IT SEEMED CLEAR THEY WOULD ACCEPT OTHER FIGURES AS WELL. THE FRENCH STILL SAW THE DEPARTURE OF PRESIDENT THIEU AS A PREREQUISITE FOR SUCH POLITICAL EVOLUTION, BECAUSE OF WHAT THE GOF CONSIDERED HIS UNALTERABLE OPPOSITION TO ANY POLITICAL EVOLUTION. BOLLE THOUGHT THAT IN AN INTERIM PROCESS SOME OF THE THIRD FORCE FIGURES SUCH AS GENERAL "BIG" MINH MIGHT PLAY AN EVEN MORE PROMINENT ROLE WITHIN SAIGON THAN THE PRG FIGURES.

3. THE FRENCH HAD NOTED THAT WITH THE RAPID COLLAPSE OF THE SOUTH VIETNAM ARMY, IT APPEARED THAT SAIGON LAY OPEN TO ATTACK FROM SEVERAL DIRECTIONS. THE FRENCH THOUGHT THE COMMUNISTS THEREFORE HAD THE CAPABILITY TO IMPOSE A MILITARY SOLUTION AND HAD REFRAINED FROM USING THAT CAPABILITY BECAUSE OF DESIRE FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION.

4. ALTHOUGH BOLLE ADMITTED THAT IN THE LONGER TERM THERE WAS THE LIKELIHOOD OF NOT ONLY THE COMMUNIZATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM, BUT ITS UNIFICATION UNDER THE DRV; IN THE SHORTER TERM A POLITICAL SOLUTION PROVIDING FOR A GREATER ROLE FOR THE PRG AND THE THIRD FORCE WOULD, IN THE FRENCH VIEW, PROVIDE THE MOST HUMANITARIAN SOLUTION FOR THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE AND THE BEST CHANCE FOR A NONCOMMUNIST OR MORE HUMANELY COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

5. COMMENT: GOF MAY STILL HOPE TO INFLUENCE USG VIEWS ON PRG AND "THIRD FORCE" BY REPLAYING ITS OLD REFRAIN.
RUSH

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